DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 569 UD 035 200

AUTHOR	Phillips, Katherin Ross
TITLE	Parent Work and Child Well-Being in Low-Income Families. Occasional Paper. Assessing the New Federalism: An Urban Institute Program To Assess Changing Social Policies.
INSTITUTION	Urban Inst., Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, MI.; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, NJ.; Ford Foundation, New York, NY.; David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Los Altos, CA.; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL.; Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, MI.; McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis, MN.; Commonwealth Fund, New York, NY.; Weingart Foundation, Los Angeles, CA.; Fund for New Jersey, East Orange.; Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, Milwaukee, WI.; Joyce Foundation, Chicago, IL.; Rockefeller Foundation, New York, NY.; Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
REPORT NO	OP-56
PUB DATE	2002-06-00
NOTE	48p.; Also supported by the Stuart Foundation and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.
AVAILABLE FROM	Urban Institute, 2100 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037. Tel: 202-833-7200; Fax: 202-429-0687; e-mail: paffairs@ui.urban.org. For full text: http://www.urban.org..
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; Age Differences; *Child Welfare; *Employed Parents; *Low Income Groups; One Parent Family; *Parent Child Relationship; Parent Influence; Preschool Children; Well Being; Working Hours
IDENTIFIERS	National Survey of Americas Families

ABSTRACT

This study used data from the National Survey of America's Families to examine contemporaneous relationships between patterns of parent work and positive child outcomes among low-income families by focusing on how parents organized their work schedules, relationships between patterns of parent work and child wellbeing, and relationships between children of single versus married parents. Results, categorized by child age, indicated that most low-income children had at least one parent who worked full-time. In general, levels of parent work were not related to positive child outcomes, even when family income was considered. However, a few exceptions existed. High levels of parent work negatively associated with indicators of parent involvement among low-income preschoolers of single parents. How parents scheduled their work seemed most important for low-income, school-age children of married parents. For all children, positive outcomes were more strongly associated with both family and child characteristics than with patterns of parent work. Tables are appended. (Contains 16 references, 24 notes, and 7 tables) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 467 569

Parent Work and Child Well-Being in Low-Income Families

Katherin Ross Phillips
The Urban Institute

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Occasional Paper Number 56

Assessing the New Federalism
An Urban Institute Program to Assess Changing Social Policies

The Urban Institute
2100 M Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: 202.833.7200
Fax: 202.429.0687
E-Mail: paffairs@ui.urban.org
http://www.urban.org

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Brown
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

UD 035 200

Copyright © June 2002. The Urban Institute. All rights reserved. Except for short quotes, no part of this book may be reproduced in any form or utilized in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by information storage or retrieval system, without written permission from the Urban Institute.

This paper is part of the Urban Institute's *Assessing the New Federalism* project, a multiyear project to monitor and assess the devolution of social programs from the federal to the state and local levels. Alan Weil is the project director. The project analyzes changes in income support, social services, and health programs. In collaboration with Child Trends, the project studies child and family well-being.

The project is supported by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Commonwealth Fund, the Stuart Foundation, the Weingart Foundation, The Fund for New Jersey, The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, and The Rockefeller Foundation.

The nonpartisan Urban Institute publishes studies, reports, and books on timely topics worthy of public consideration. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders.

The author would like to thank Gregory Acs, Jennifer Ehrle, Pamela Loprest, Sandi Nelson, Jane Waldfogel, Alan Weil, and Sheila Zedlewski for their input and suggestions on this report.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

About the Series

Assessing the New Federalism is a multiyear Urban Institute project designed to analyze the devolution of responsibility for social programs from the federal government to the states, focusing primarily on health care, income security, employment and training programs, and social services. Researchers monitor program changes and fiscal developments. In collaboration with Child Trends, the project studies changes in family well-being. The project aims to provide timely, nonpartisan information to inform public debate and to help state and local decisionmakers carry out their new responsibilities more effectively.

Key components of the project include a household survey, studies of policies in 13 states, and a database with information on all states and the District of Columbia, available at the Urban Institute's web site (http://www.urban.org). This paper is one in a series of occasional papers analyzing information from these and other sources.

Contents

Executive Summary vii

Introduction 1

Data and Methods 3
- Data and Sample Selection 3
- Measures 3
- Analytic Method 5

Results 7
- Low-Income Children under Age 6 7
- Low-Income Children Age 6 to 11 12
- Low-Income Children Age 12 to 17 17

Summary and Conclusion 21

Appendix Tables 24

Notes 32

References 34

About the Author 37

Executive Summary

Over the past decade, increasing numbers of low-income parents have entered the labor force. How parents combine their market work and their child-rearing responsibilities has become an important concern for policymakers and researchers. One reason for the interest is that working parents' ability to meet the competing demands on their time may influence their children's well-being. To date, the majority of the research on the relationships between parent work and child well-being has examined the effects of maternal employment on child development. Reviews of this literature typically conclude that maternal employment is not related to negative achievement and behavior outcomes for school-age and older children. Investigations of the influence of maternal employment on contemporaneous and longer-term outcomes for young children yield inconsistent results. Further, recent evidence from evaluations of welfare-to-work programs suggests that children of welfare leavers may neither directly benefit nor suffer from a change in their mother's work status. Income, rather than hours of maternal work, may be more important for this subgroup of children.

As the size of the welfare population continues to wane, it becomes increasingly important to shift some of the research focus away from studies of welfare leavers and onto studies of the larger population of low-income families. Making this shift requires a consideration of not just maternal work effort but paternal work effort as well. Using data from the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF), this paper examines contemporaneous relationships between patterns of parent work and positive child outcomes among low-income families by asking three questions. How do parents organize their work schedules? Are there relationships between patterns of parent work and child well-being? Are the relationships the same for children of single parents and children of married parents?

The paper finds that most low-income children have at least one parent who works full-time. In general, levels of parent work are not associated with positive child outcomes, even when family income is considered. A few exceptions, however, do exist. High levels of parent work are negatively associated with indicators of parent involvement among low-income preschoolers of single parents. How parents schedule their work seems most important for low-income, school-age children of married parents. For all children, positive outcomes are more strongly associated with both family and child characteristics than with patterns of parent work. Results in the paper are categorized by child's age. For comparison, some of the key associations between child well-being and parent work and home environment are summarized by marital status below.

Key Findings by Parents' Marital Status

Low-Income Children of Single Parents

- Full-time work is common among low-income single parents. Nearly two-fifths of low-income children under age 6 with single parents have a parent who works full-time; 48 percent of low-income children ages 6 to 11 with single parents have a parent who works full-time; and 54 percent of low-income adolescents with single parents have a parent who works full-time.
- Full-time work is negatively associated with indicators of parent involvement for low-income children under age 6 with single parents. But levels of work are not related to positive outcomes for older children of single parents. Working the night shift is unassociated with either parent involvement or child well-being for low-income children of single parents.
- Involvement in extracurricular activities is less likely among low-income children age 6 to 17 when their single parent has less than a high school education. Interestingly, this measure of parent education is not strongly related to any other outcome for low-income children of single parents.
- The presence of siblings or other children in the family reduces the likelihood that a young child of a low-income single parent is read to frequently by family members. Other adults in the family, however, increase the likelihood of frequent reading. While the presence of other children is unrelated to outcomes for older children, having other adults in the household increases the probability that a child age 6 to 11 has few behavioral problems.
- Young children of low-income single parents in poor health are less likely to be read to frequently by family members. Parent health, however, is unrelated to outcomes for older children (between the ages of 6 and 17). In contrast, poor parent mental health is associated with a reduced likelihood of favorable outcomes among low-income, school-age children and adolescents but unrelated to parent involvement for the younger children of single parents.

Low-Income Children of Married Parents

- Most low-income children of married parents have at least one parent who works full-time: 90 percent of children under age 6; 87 percent of children age 6 to 11; and 85 percent of children age 12 to 17. Not surprisingly, the proportion of low-income children of married parents who have a full-time working parent married to another worker is higher for school-age children and adolescents (36 percent) than for children under 6 years old (26 percent).

- Levels of parent work and parent work schedules have stronger relationships with child outcomes among low-income, school-age children of married parents than among either their younger or older counterparts. Having a parent who works the night shift is associated with a reduction in the likelihood that a low-income, school-age child participates in extracurricular activities. But the likelihood of activity involvement increases among this group of children when their married parents both work, one full-time and the other part-time. Activity involvement also increases among low-income, school-age children as the proportion of total parent work hours worked by the mother increases.
- The share of parental work hours worked by the mother, however, is negatively associated with school engagement among low-income, school-age children. Low-income, school-age children of married parents who try to arrange their work hours so one of them can care for their child(ren) are more likely to be highly engaged in school than their counterparts whose parents do not arrange their work hours.
- Low levels of parent education are associated with reductions in parent involvement for low-income children under age 6 of married parents. Older low-income children with married parents who have a parent who did not finish high school are less likely than their counterparts with more educated parents to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Other adults in the family increase both the likelihood that young children of low-income married parents go on outings and the probability that adolescents of low-income married parents have few behavioral problems. Other children in the family, however, reduce the likelihood that young children are either read to frequently or taken on outings, as well as the likelihood of involvement in extracurricular activities for low-income children age 6 to 11 of married parents.
- Poor maternal health is both positively and negatively related to outcomes for low-income children under age 12 of married parents. Frequent reading increases, while being included on outings decreases, for children under age 6 when their married mother is in poor health. Low-income children age 6 to 11 with a married mother in poor health are more likely to be highly engaged in school but less likely to have few behavioral problems than their counterparts with healthy mothers.

Parent Work and Child Well-Being in Low-Income Families

Introduction

Over the past decade, increasing numbers of low-income parents have entered the labor force. How parents combine their market work and their child-rearing responsibilities has become an important concern for policymakers and researchers. Working parents' ability to meet the competing demands on their time may influence their children's well-being. The majority of the research that examines the relationships between parent work and child well-being examines the effects of maternal employment on child development. Reviews of this literature typically conclude that maternal employment is not related to negative achievement and behavior outcomes for school-age and older children (Belsky 1990; Hoffman 1989; Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, and Crouter 2000). A number of studies, even those using the same dataset, come to different conclusions about the contemporaneous and longer-term impacts of maternal employment on young children (for examples, see Belsky and Eggebeen 1991; Han, Waldfogel, and Brooks-Gunn 2001; Parcel and Menaghan 1994; Vandell and Ramanan 1992). In her review of the literature and reanalysis of the data, Harvey (1999) concludes that the influence of early parental employment on child development varies by the age of the child and the marital and economic status of the parents. In general, however, she finds few consistent effects, either negative or positive, of early parental employment on child well-being.

Recent evidence from evaluations of welfare-to-work programs suggests that children of welfare leavers may neither directly benefit nor suffer from a change in their mother's work status. Income, rather than hours of maternal work, may be more important for this subgroup of children. In general, welfare-to-work programs that both increased work and increased income had either no effects or positive effects on the children of the welfare leavers, while programs that did not result in increased incomes had generally negative effects on the children (Hamilton, Freedman, and McGroder 2000; Morris et al. 2001; Sherman 2001). A survey of women transitioning off of welfare finds relatively few relationships between changes in maternal work and parenting behavior (Kalil, Dunifon, and Danziger 2001).

As the size of the welfare population continues to wane, it becomes increasingly important to shift some of the research focus away from studies of welfare leavers and onto studies of the larger population of low-income families. Making this shift requires a consideration of not just maternal work effort but paternal work effort as well. Married parents make conscious deci-

sions about the number of hours that each parent works and how they will organize their work schedules. For example, a couple may decide that they both would like to have full-time jobs, but they would also prefer to have one parent at home with their child for a portion of the typical work day. This couple may choose to have one parent work a night shift while the other works during the day. Their decision about how to schedule their market work hours may influence their child's well-being. The relationship could be positive, by providing more parent time to the child, or negative, by increasing stress in the household.

Both single and married parents face labor supply decisions and labor demand constraints. How they resolve these trade-offs influences the amount and type of resources they can provide for their children. While more time at the office may provide additional income and other material resources, it also reduces the amount of time parents can spend with their children. Working parents can be positive role models for children; however, parent work may also increase family stress. It is not clear from previous research or theory whether high levels of parent work should be associated with either positive or negative outcomes for children. In addition, other factors, such as the quality of child care and the presence of other adults in the family, can mediate the influence of parent work on child well-being.

Using data from the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF), this paper examines contemporaneous relationships between patterns of parent work and positive child outcomes among low-income families by asking three questions. How do parents organize their work schedules? Are there relationships between patterns of parent work and child well-being? Are the relationships the same for children of single parents and children of married parents?

The paper finds that most low-income children have at least one parent who works full-time. In general, levels of parent work are not associated with positive child outcomes, even when family income is considered. A few exceptions, however, do exist. High levels of parent work are negatively associated with indicators of parent involvement among low-income preschoolers with single parents. How parents schedule their work seems most important for school-age children with married parents. For all children, positive outcomes are more strongly associated with both family and child characteristics than with patterns of parent work.

The next section describes the data used in the analyses, defines the parent work and child outcome measures, and outlines the analytic method used in the paper. Next are the results, reporting the findings for preschoolers (children under age 6), school-age children (children age 6 to 11), and adolescents (children age 12 to 17) separately. The paper concludes with a summary of its findings.

Data and Methods

Data and Sample Selection

Data for this paper come from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families (NSAF). The NSAF is a survey of the economic, health, and social characteristics of Americans, with an emphasis on low-income families with children.[1] Data from the survey are nationally representative of the civilian noninstitutionalized population under age 65 and their families. The NSAF contains an oversample of families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), allowing detailed analyses of subgroups of low-income families.

In households with children under the age of 18, the NSAF interviewers select up to two children for in-depth interviews: one under the age of 6 and another between the ages of 6 and 17. The adult in the household who is most knowledgeable (MKA) about each selected child answers questions about family members' economic, health, and social characteristics. For most children, the MKA is the child's biological mother.

Much of the prior research on the associations between parent work and child well-being has either focused exclusively on families transitioning from welfare to work or has analyzed outcomes for children in specific age ranges, regardless of their welfare status. In contrast, this paper examines children of all ages who live in low-income families. Here low-income includes all children living in families with incomes less than 200 percent of FPL.[2]

Marital status influences the choices parents can make about how to pattern their market work. As a result, this paper separates low-income children into two groups according to the marital status of their parents (married versus single). To be included in the married parents' sample, low-income children must live with both parents at the time of the survey, and their parents must have a legal marital relationship. Parents may be biological, step, or adoptive. Children who live with cohabiting partners are excluded from the analysis.[3] Children in the single-parent sample live with only one of their parents, and their custodial parent may be neither married nor cohabiting. Parents of these children may be widowed, divorced, separated, or never married.[4]

Measures

Patterns of Parent Work

To describe parent work effort, I developed two separate categorizations of parent work—one for children of single parents and one for children of married parents. For children of single parents, the market work effort of their parents is classified as either part-time (PT—usually works more than 1 but less than 35 hours per week); full-time (FT—usually works at least 35 hours per week); or no work (NW—usually works zero hours per week).[5]

For children of married parents, the categorical measures of parent work are designed to capture the combination of both the mother's and the father's labor supply under the assumption that couples plan their labor supply jointly. The five categories of market work effort are based on the parents' current "usual hours of work":

Full-time/full-time (FT/FT): Both parents work at least 35 hours per week.

Full-time/part-time (FT/PT): One parent works at least 35 hours per week and the other parent works between 1 and 34 hours per week.

Full-time/no work (FT/NW): One parent works at least 35 hours per week and the other parent is not employed.

Part-time/[part-time/no work] (PT/[PT/NW]): One parent works between 1 and 34 hours per week and the other parent either works between 1 and 34 hours per week or is not employed.

No work/no work (NW/NW): Neither parent is employed.

An additional set of variables captures various characteristics of the parents' work schedules. These variables are described in the analytic method section below.

Child Outcome Measures

The child outcome variables in the NSAF vary by the age of the child. Thus, the analysis that follows is divided not only by the marital status of the parents but also by the age of the child. For children under the age of 6, this paper explores the frequency of interactions with family members. For school-age children and adolescents, the analysis focuses on behavioral and school outcomes. Below, I describe each outcome measure.[6]

Children under Age 6. The two well-being measures for children under 6 (preschoolers)—frequent reading and frequent outings—measure cognitive stimulation provided to the child by family members. These are not child outcome measures but rather indicators of mediating factors. For example, children who are read to frequently when they are young have higher test scores when they are school-aged (Wells 1985). In this paper, the outcome measures for preschoolers are labeled "parent involvement."

Frequent reading: Identifies children who are read to or told stories frequently (six or more days a week) by family members.

Frequent outings: Identifies children who are taken on frequent outings (at least once a day) by family members.

Children Age 6 to 17. The outcome measures for children age 6 to 11 (school-aged) and 12 to 17 (adolescents) are conceptually the same, but they are measured differently for the two groups. The three measures are as follows:

Few behavioral problems: Identifies children with low levels of behavioral and emotional problems, using a set of questions developed as an indicator of children's mental health for the National Health Interview Survey.[7]

Engaged in school: Identifies children who are highly engaged in school, using a scale measure of school engagement.[8]

Involved in activities: Identifies children who were involved in at least one extracurricular activity over the past year. Activities include sports, clubs, and lessons.

The analysis focuses on positive outcomes for children. For all the outcome measures except activity involvement, the absence of a positive outcome does not imply a negative outcome. For example, most children who do not have "few behavioral problems" (a positive outcome) also do not have "a lot of behavioral problems" (a negative outcome). Instead, the majority of children have some problems but not enough to be considered troublesome.[9,10]

Analytic Method

The analysis in this paper is organized by the age of the child. In each of the results sections, descriptions of parents' work effort are followed by a summary of parenting/child outcomes by marital status. Although the main interest of the paper is to explore relationships between parent work and child well-being, other factors act upon children and parents and may influence not only child well-being but also how parent work affects child well-being. To help disentangle some of the work/outcome relationships, a set of multivariate analyses is undertaken to control for other factors that may influence child well-being.[11]

Because I am interested in understanding the associations between child outcomes and the amount of parent work, as well as their work schedules, the multivariate analyses are restricted to families with some work effort. Thus the results describe the relationships between child well-being and different levels of parent work rather than the relationships between child well-being and no parent work versus some parent work. For each child outcome, two logistic regression equations are estimated—one for children of single parents and one for children of married parents. The results from these equations isolate the size and statistical strength of the relationship between, for example, parent work and child well-being from the effect of the other variables included in the equation. In other words, we estimate the relationship between parent work and child well-being net of many of the other factors we believe are associated with child well-being.

The variables included in the multivariate analyses fall into three main categories: parent work, family environment, and child characteristics. The parent work variables are measured as follows:

Categorical work variables: As defined above under Patterns of Parent Work, the omitted category is either FT/NW for children with married parents or PT for children with single parents.[12]

Percentage of total parent hours worked by mother: The percentage of total parent hours of work (sum of both of the parents' usual hours of work) that are usually worked by the child's mother. Used to assess the availability of the

mother relative to the father in the regressions for children of married parents.

A parent works odd hours: If at least one parent's usual work schedule is between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., the child receives a 1 for this variable.

Parents arranged work hours: For children under the age of 12 who have two working parents, this variable indicates that over the past month the parents arranged their work schedules so they could take turns caring for the child. (Used only in the specifications for children of married parents.)

The family environment variables are family income, the number of other children in the family, and indicators of the type of primary child care arrangement (for preschoolers), poor parent mental health, parent aggravation, parent and child argue a lot (for adolescents), another adult in the family, and a parent has less than a high school education. Included child characteristics are age and indicators of disability, race, ethnicity, and sex. Appendix table 1 includes definitions for each of the family environment and child characteristic variables, along with each variable's metric.

Many of the family environment variables may be related to work. For example, high levels of work may be associated with high levels of parent aggravation. Including highly correlated variables in a multivariate regression can make it difficult to determine the separate influence of the variables on the outcome. In the data, however, none of the family environment and child characteristics are highly correlated with levels of parent work. Although a number of the correlation coefficients are statistically significant, their levels tend to be low—nearly every correlation coefficient has an absolute value less than 0.20. For example, for school-age children with single parents, the correlation coefficient for full-time work and parent aggravation is -0.06.

On their own, coefficients from logistic regressions can be difficult to interpret. As a result, this paper uses predicted probabilities to demonstrate the size of the relationships between child outcomes, parent work, and other factors.[12] To calculate predicted probabilities, the coefficients for each variable are multiplied by a value, typically the sample average, for each variable. The sum of these products is transformed into a probability.[13] To examine the influence of one of the included variables, the value for that variable is set to 1 if the variable is a categorical value or some level of interest if the variable is a continuous variable. For example, if we were interested in exploring the association between frequent reading and having a parent who works odd hours, we would use the regression results to calculate a predicted probability that the child is read to frequently by including the average values for all the variables in the regression equation but fixing the parent works odd hours variable at 1.

Results

The following results are not meant to suggest a behavioral relationship, but they do suggest associations between parent work patterns, other variables, and child outcomes. In this section, I discuss results for preschoolers, school-age children, and teenagers, respectively. Within each age group, a discussion of the patterns of parent work for each marital status precedes a description of the average outcomes for children by their parents' marital status. After describing the univariate results, I present and discuss results from the multivariate analyses. Each age group section concludes with a brief summary.

Low-Income Children under Age 6

Patterns of Parent Work

Single Parents. The majority (55.6 percent) of low-income children under age 6 who live with single parents have a parent who works: 39.1 percent have a parent who works full-time, while 16.5 percent have a parent who works between 1 and 34 hours per week.[15] The remaining 44.3 percent of low-income preschoolers of single parents have parents who do not work. Among children under age 6 of a single parent who works, the average weekly hours of parent work is 36 hours (see appendix table A2a).

Married Parents. Sixty-four percent of low-income preschoolers of married parents have one parent who works full-time and another parent who does not work. More than one in four, however, have two parents who work—13.2 percent have two parents who work full-time, and 12.6 percent have a parent who works full-time and a parent who works part-time. Among low-income preschoolers with married parents at least one of whom works, their parents work, on average, a combined 55 hours per week (see appendix table A2b).

How Are Low-Income Preschoolers Faring?

More than one-third (36.9 percent) of low-income children under age 6 who live in single-parent families are read to frequently by family members, and nearly 24 percent are taken on daily outings by family members. Among low-income preschoolers with married parents, 42.8 percent are read to frequently by family members, and 23.1 percent are taken on daily outings. Surprisingly, these percentages are not much larger than the percentages for young children of single parents. Given that there are typically more adults and, by definition, one more parent in these children's families, it seems reasonable to expect that children of married parents might benefit from more interactions with family members.

Relationships between Parent Work and Child Well-Being

In addition to parent work, many other factors influence the quality and quantity of parent-child interactions. For example, having additional children to care for can take some time away from a parent's interaction with a child. If we can statistically eliminate the influence of other factors on parent

involvement, a clearer picture of the association between parent work and child outcomes may result.

To further explore the associations between parent work and the two measures of parent involvement, I use a multivariate regression to predict parent involvement with children, holding measures of parent work, the child's environment, and the child's characteristics constant. The results from the regressions are then used to predict the probability of a positive outcome, assuming different levels of parent work as well as different levels of the other intervening variables.[16]

Levels of Parent Work. For low income preschoolers of single parents, full time work is associated with less parent involvement than part-time work. The top portion of table 1 indicates that we would expect 36.0 percent of low-income preschoolers with a single parent who works full-time to be read to frequently by family members, compared with 49.0 percent of low-income preschoolers with a single parent who works part-time. Likewise, the likelihood that a child is taken on frequent outings is estimated to be much larger for low-income preschoolers with part-time than full-time working single parents (26.0 percent compared with 15.4 percent). These percentages are calculated on the assumption that preschoolers of full-time and part time working parents have the same family and child characteristics. In other words, I assume that they differ only in the amount of hours their parents work. The predicted probabilities, then, allow a comparison of the influence of different levels of work net of other intervening factors.

Table 1. Predicted Percentage of Children under Age 6 with Positive Outcomes, by Parent Work Status (Low-Income Children with Working Parents, 1999)

	Frequent reading	Frequent outings
Single parents		
Full-time	36.0*	15.4**
Part-time	49.0	26.0
Married parents		
Full-time/full-time	37.4	22.1
Full-time/part-time	36.3	19.7
Full-time/no work	42.5	20.4
Part-time/other	53.1	25.2

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.

Notes: Predicted probabilities are calculated from the results of multivariate regressions that control for parent work, family environment, and child characteristics. See text for details.

* significantly different from the part-time estimate at the .10 level.

** significantly different from the part-time estimate at the .05 level.

No values for children of single parents were significantly different from the part-time estimates at the .01 level.

No values for children of married parents were significantly different from the full-time/no work estimates at the .10, .05, or .01 levels.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

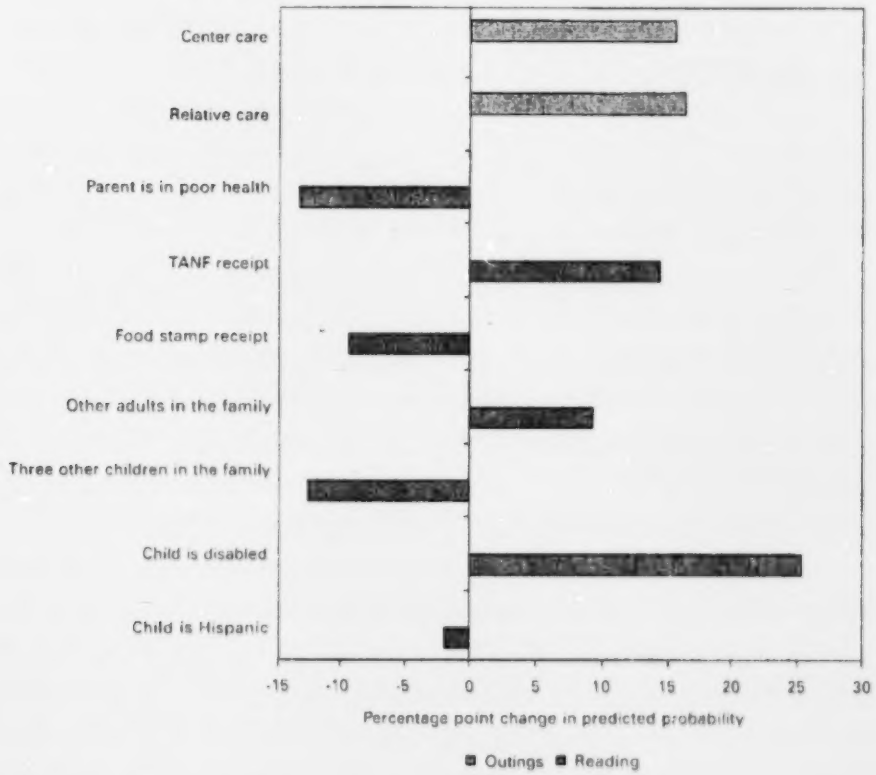
In contrast, for low-income preschoolers of married parents, high levels of parent work are not associated with less parent involvement than lower levels of parent work are (bottom portion of table 1). Low-income preschoolers who have two full-time working parents have a higher likelihood of being taken on daily outings by family members and a lower likelihood of being read to frequently by family members than preschoolers with a parent who works full-time and a parent who does not work (22.1 percent compared with 20.4 percent, and 37.4 percent compared with 42.5 percent). However, none of the estimated outcomes for low-income preschoolers with married parents with different levels of work are statistically different from the estimated outcomes for low-income preschoolers with a parent who works full-time and a parent who does not. In addition, none of the parent work schedule variables, such as working odd hours or arranging hours, are strongly associated with parent involvement.

Family Environment and Child Characteristics. Some of the family environment and child characteristics included in the analyses are associated with child outcomes. The size and strength of the associations vary by parent marital status. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the relative size of the relationships between parent involvement and these other factors. The figures display only the associations that are statistically significant. Each factor is listed on the vertical axis and its relationship with frequent outings is shown by a light gray bar, while its relationship with frequent reading is shown by a black bar. If a factor does not have both bars next to it, its relationship with the missing parent involvement measure is statistically insignificant.

Figure 1 presents results for low-income preschoolers with single parents and figure 2 presents results for low-income preschoolers with married parents. Each figure includes the change in the likelihood that preschoolers with parents who work full-time experience one of the measures of parent involvement. For example, to calculate the change in the likelihood that a low-income preschooler with a single, full-time working parent is taken on frequent outings based on whether the child is in center care, I estimate the likelihood of the positive outcome assuming every child has a parent who works full-time and uses center care as the child's primary care arrangement (31.1 percent). From this predicted probability, I subtract the average predicted probability in table 1 (15.4 percent). The net result (15.7 percentage points) is shown in the first light gray bar on figure 1.[17] Because the association between center care and frequent reading among preschoolers with single parents is statistically insignificant, center care does not have a black bar next to it.

Poor parent health, Food Stamp receipt, and additional children in the family are all associated with a reduced probability that low-income preschoolers of single parents are read to frequently by family members. The percentage point reduction ranges from 9.2 points (Food Stamp receipt) to 13.1 points (poor parent health). Conversely, receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), other adults in the family, and child disability are all associated with an increased probability that low-income preschoolers of single parents are read to frequently by family members. In this case, the percentage point increase ranges from 9.4 points (other adults)

Figure 1. Change in Predicted Probability of Positive Parenting, Low-Income Children under Age 6 with Single Parents Who Work Full-Time



Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.
Notes: Results are shown only for statistically significant relationships. See text for a list of all variables included in the analysis.
TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

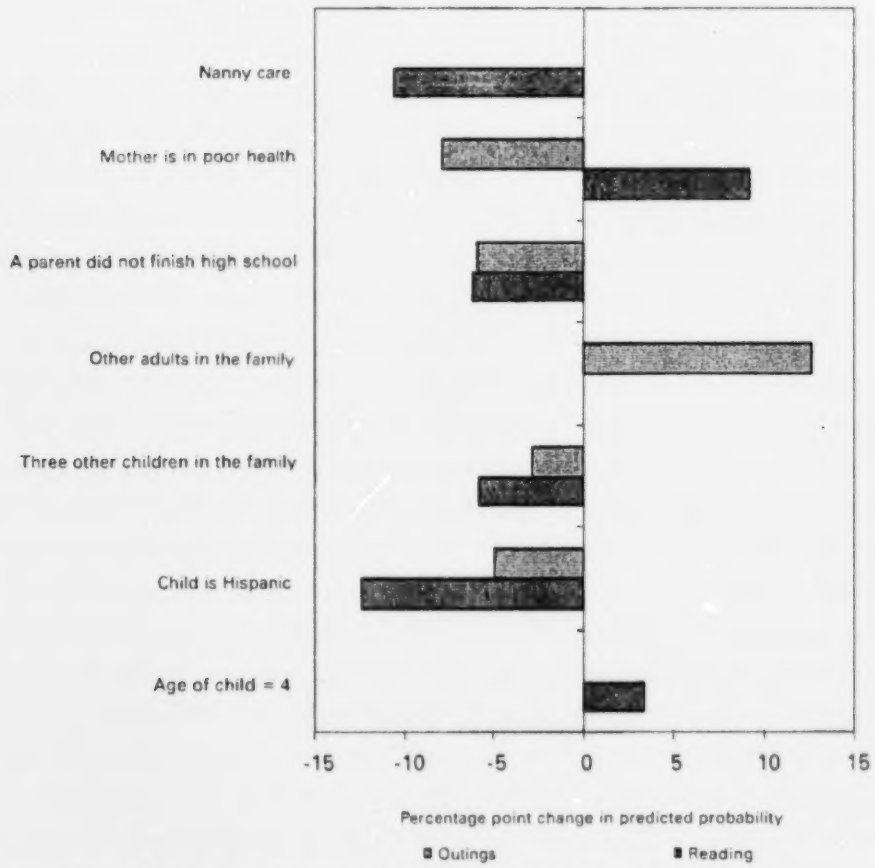
to 25.5 points (child is disabled). Outings are positively associated with both center and relative care; children who are placed in these forms of care are, on average, 16 percentage points more likely to go on daily outings with family members.

Nanny care, a parent who did not finish high school, additional children in the family, and being Hispanic are all associated with a reduction in the likelihood that low-income preschoolers of married parents are read to frequently by family members (figure 2). Nanny care and being Hispanic are associated with the largest reductions, 10.8 and 13.1 points, respectively. A mother in poor health and age of child are positively associated with frequent reading by family members.

Conversely, a mother in poor health is associated with a reduction in the likelihood that a low-income preschooler with married parents is taken on

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 2. Change in Predicted Probabilities of Positive Parenting, Low-Income Children under Age 6 with Married Parents Who Work Full-Time



Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.
Note: Results are shown only for statistically significant relationships. See text for a list of all variables included in the analysis.

frequent outings by family members. Perhaps the parent(s) substitute reading for outside activities when health limitations preclude the mother from leaving the house. In addition to maternal health, low parent education, additional children, and being Hispanic are all associated with a reduced likelihood that a low-income preschooler with married parents is taken on frequent outings. The effect sizes, however, are relatively small. Having other adults in the family increases by 12.7 percentage points the likelihood that low-income preschoolers of married parents who both work full-time are taken on frequent outings by family members.

Summary of Results for Low-Income Preschoolers

Most low-income preschoolers have a parent who works. Ninety percent of low-income preschoolers with married parents have a parent who works

Table 2. Predicted Percentage of Children Age 6 to 11 with Positive Outcomes, by Parent Work Status (Low-Income Children with Working Parents, 1999)

	Few behavioral problems	Engaged in school	Involved in activities
Single parents			
Full-time	20.3	37.4	68.1
Part-time	21.0	31.0	68.9
Married parents			
Full-time/full-time	33.8	36.2	75.3
Full-time/part-time	30.3	40.7	84.4*
Full-time/no work	28.5	45.1	72.4
Part-time/other	28.1	37.8	68.0

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.

Notes: Predicted probabilities are calculated from the results of multivariate regressions that control for parent work, family environment, and child characteristics. See text for details.

* significantly different from the full-time/no work estimate at the .10 level.

No values for children of single parents were significantly different from the part-time estimates at the .10, .05, or .01 levels.

No values for children of married parents were significantly different from the full-time/no work estimates at the .05 or .01 levels.

full-time. Nearly two-fifths of low-income preschoolers with single parents have a parent who works full-time. Levels of parent work are not strongly associated with parent involvement for children of married parents. However, full-time work is negatively associated with both measures of parent involvement for children of single parents.

Family environment and child characteristics are related to parent involvement for low-income preschoolers. The relationships, however, differ by parent marital status. For example, type of child care is strongly associated with going on outings for preschoolers of single parents and not statistically related to going on outings for preschoolers of married parents. In addition, low levels of parent education are more strongly associated with parent involvement for low-income preschoolers of married parents than for low-income preschoolers of single parents. Mother's health status is positively associated with reading among low-income preschoolers of married parents but negatively associated with outings among this same group of children. In contrast, among low-income preschoolers of single parents, parent health is negatively associated with frequent reading.

Low-Income Children Age 6 to 11

Patterns of Parent Work

Single Parents. More than two-thirds of low-income children age 6 to 11 of single parents have a parent who works: 47.8 percent have a parent who works full-time, and 19.8 percent have a parent who works part-time.[18] The parents of the remaining 32.5 percent of low-income, school-age children of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

single parents do not work. Among school-age children with a single parent who works, the average amount of parent work is 37 hours per week (see appendix table A3a).

Married Parents. Fifty-one percent of low-income, school-age children of married parents have one parent who works full-time and another parent who does not work. More than one in three children, however, have two parents who work—20.9 percent have two parents who work full-time and another 15.0 percent have a parent who works full-time and a parent who works part-time. Among low-income, school-age children of married parents at least one of whom works, the parents work, on average, a combined 58 hours per week (see appendix table A3b).

How Are Low-Income, School-Age Children Faring?

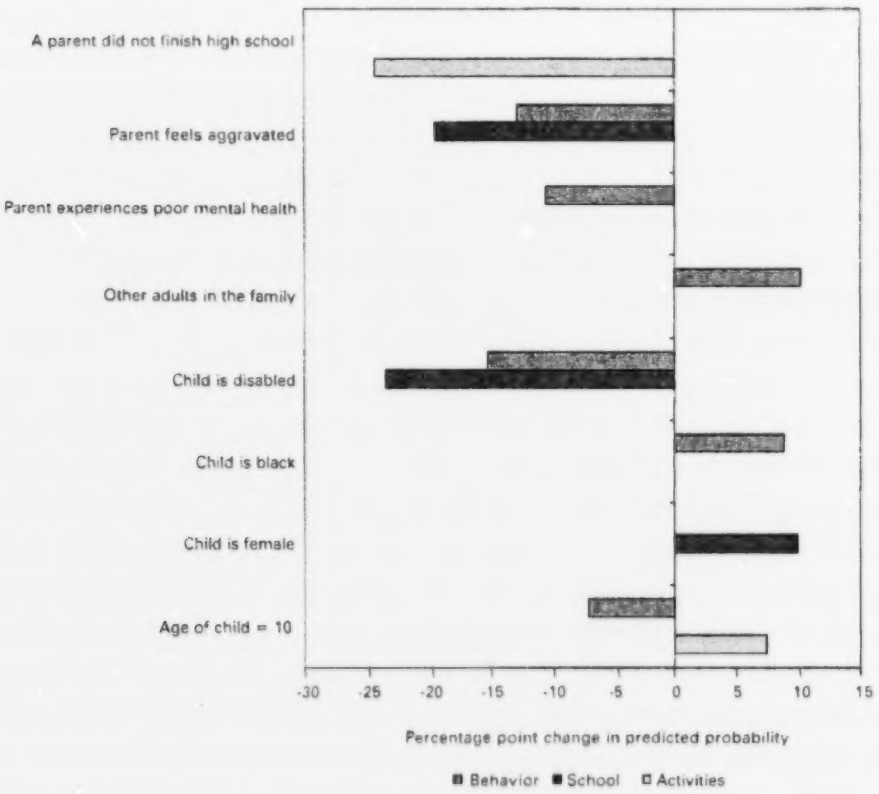
One in four low-income, school-age children of single parents exhibit few behavioral problems, 37.4 percent are highly engaged in school, and 66.1 percent are involved in activities. Thirty-five percent of low-income, school-age children of married parents exhibit few behavioral problems; 41.5 percent are engaged in school, and 71.4 percent are involved in some extracurricular activity. Across all outcomes, the average likelihood that low-income, school-age children of married parents have a positive outcome is higher than that for low-income, school-age children of single parents.

Relationships between Parent Work and Child Well-Being

Levels of Parent Work. Even when we consider other factors that may influence child well-being, levels of parent work are not statistically associated with positive behavior, school engagement, or activity for low-income, school-age children of single parents (top portion of table 2).[19] In fact, the predicted probabilities for positive behavior and activity involvement are nearly the same for school-age children of a single full-time worker and for school-age children of a single part-time worker (20.3 percent compared with 21.0 percent and 68.1 percent compared with 68.9 percent). Further, having a parent who typically works a night shift is also not associated with child well-being.

As was the case with low-income preschoolers, the results for low-income, school-age children of married parents differ from the results for low-income, school-age children with single parents. For this group of children, how parents organize their work schedules is somewhat associated with contemporaneous child outcomes (bottom portion of table 2). Children who have a parent who works full-time married to a parent who works part-time are more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities than children who have one parent who works full-time and one nonworking parent (84.4 percent compared with 72.4 percent). In addition, how parents organize their work schedules is associated with child well-being for low-income, school-age children of married parents. As discussed below, the share of parent hours of work that are worked by a child's mother, night shift work, and having parents who arrange their work schedules to care for their children are all associated with some of the child well-being measures for this group of children.

Figure 3. Change in Predicted Probability of Positive Outcomes, Low-Income Children Age 6 to 11 with Single Parents Who Work Full-Time



Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.
Note: Results are shown only for statistically significant relationships. See text for a list of all variables included in the analysis.

Other Factors. Although levels of parent work are not statistically associated with child well-being for low-income, school-age children of single parents, some family environment and child characteristics measures have strong relationships with positive behavior, school engagement, and activity involvement (figure 3). Parent aggravation, poor parent mental health, child disability, and child age are all associated with a reduced likelihood that a low-income, school-age child of a full-time working single parent exhibits few behavioral problems. The percentage point reduction ranges from 7.0 points (child is 10 years old) to 15.1 points (child is disabled). Conversely, having other adults in the family and being black are associated with an increased probability that low-income, school-age children of single parents are classified as having few behavioral problems. The percentage point increase is 8.9 points for black and 10.2 points for other adults in the family.

Parent aggravation and child disability are also associated with a reduced probability that a low-income, school-age child of a single parent is highly engaged in school. For low-income, school-age children of single parents

Table 3. Predicted Percentage of Children Age 12 to 17 with Positive Outcomes, by Parent Work Status (Low-Income Children with Working Parents, 1999)

	Few behavioral problems	Engaged in school	Involved in activities
Single parents			
Full-time	18.0	31.8	77.6
Part-time	16.6	29.1	82.2
Married parents			
Full-time/full-time	23.4	24.7	78.2
Full-time/part-time	29.4	29.2	74.6
Full-time/no work	26.2	32.3	77.7
Part-time/other	19.1	38.2	79.8

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.
Notes: Predicted probabilities are calculated from the results of multivariate regressions that control for parent work, family environment, and child characteristics. See text for details.

No values for children of single parents were significantly different from the part-time estimates at the .10, .05, or .01 levels, and no values for children of married parents were significantly different from the full-time/no work estimates at the .10, .05, or .01 levels.

who work full-time, the percentage point reductions are 19.4 points for parent aggravation and 23.4 points for child disability. Female school-age children are more likely to be engaged in school than male school-age children.

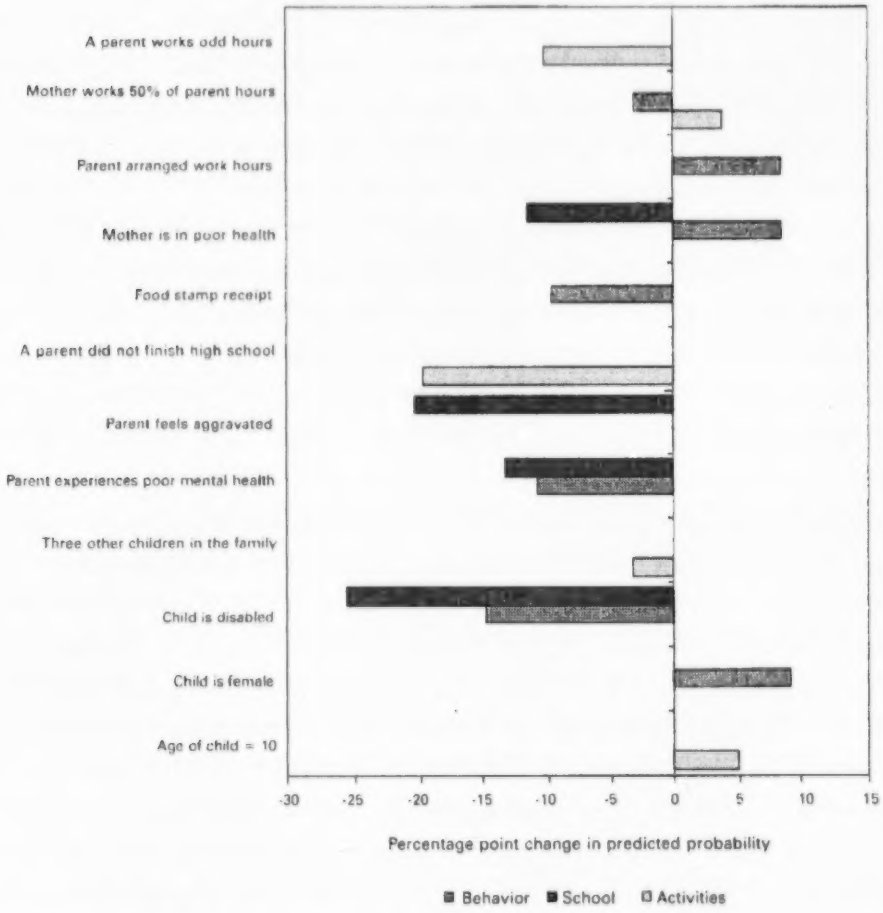
Having a parent who did not finish high school reduces the probability that a low-income, school-age child is involved in extracurricular activities by more than a third (24.2 percentage points) for children of single parents who work full-time. Age is the only other characteristic included in the regression associated with involvement in extracurricular activities. As low-income, school-age children of single parents age, they are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities.

Levels of parent work are generally not associated with child well-being among low-income, school-age children of married parents. However, how parents schedule their hours of work is related to both school engagement and activity involvement. Having a mother who works at least half of all of the parent hours of work is associated with an increased likelihood that a child is involved in activities and a decreased likelihood that the child is highly engaged in school (figure 4). A low-income, school-age child whose parents arrange their work hours so one of them can care for the child is more likely to be highly engaged in school. Low-income, school-age children with a married parent who works nonstandard hours, however, are less likely to engage in extracurricular activities. The results do not suggest a strong relationship between patterns of parent work and positive behavior among low-income, school-age children of married parents.

Interestingly, low-income, school-age children with married mothers in poor health are less likely to exhibit positive behaviors but more likely to be positively engaged in school. Having a married parent who is in poor mental

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 4. Change in Predicted Probability of Positive Outcomes, Low-Income Children Age 6 to 11 with Married Parents Who Work Full-Time



Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.
Note: Results are shown only for statistically significant relationships. See text for a list of all variables included in the analysis.

health, however, is related to a reduced probability that low-income children age 6 to 11 either have few behavioral problems or are highly engaged in school. Parent aggravation is associated with a reduced probability that a child exhibits positive behavior, but not statistically related to the other two outcomes. Disabled children are much less likely to have few behavioral problems or be highly engaged in school.[20] Female students are more likely to be highly engaged in school than male students.

As well as being associated with patterns of parent work, activity involvement among low-income, school-age children of married parents is related to parents' education, the number of other children in the family, and the age

of the child. Having a parent who did not finish high school is associated with a 19 percentage point reduction in the likelihood that a low-income, school-age child of married parents is involved in activities. Having other children in the family reduces the probability as well, but not by nearly as much as parent education. As was the case with children of single parents, older school-age children of married parents are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities than younger ones are.

Summary of Results for Low-Income, School-Age Children

A majority of low-income, school-age children see a parent go to work full-time each week. Nearly half of low-income, school-age children with single parents and 87 percent of low-income, school-age children with married parents have a parent who works full-time. Although parents of low-income, school-age children have higher levels of market work than parents of low-income preschoolers, contemporaneous relationships between levels of parent work and child well-being for children in this age group are not strong. However, how parents schedule their work hours is related to child well-being for school-age children with married parents. Particularly interesting are the relationships between the share of parent work hours worked by the mother and school engagement, on the one hand, and activity involvement on the other. The relationship is negative for school engagement and positive for activity involvement. The positive relationship between a mother's share of hours and activity involvement could suggest that these parents are using extracurricular activities as a form of child care when the mother is working.

Low-Income Children Age 12 to 17

Patterns of Parent Work

Single Parents. Among low-income adolescents of single parents, 54.0 percent have a parent who works full-time, 13.4 percent have a parent who works part-time, and 32.6 percent have a parent who does not work.[21] The average hours of parent work among low-income adolescents with a single parent who works is 39 hours (see appendix table A4a). While the single parents of low-income adolescents tend to work more than the single parents of very young children, the differences are not that large—67.4 percent of low-income adolescents of single parents see their parent go to work, compared with 55.6 percent of low-income preschoolers and 67.6 percent of low-income, school-age children. The proportion of low-income children with parents who work full-time, however, seems to increase throughout the age range—from 39.1 percent for preschoolers to 47.8 percent for school-age children and 54.0 percent for adolescents.

Married Parents. Nearly half (48.1 percent) of all low-income adolescents of married parents have one parent who works full-time and another parent who does not work. And 36.4 percent have two parents who work—21.1 percent have two parents who work full-time and another 15.3 percent have a parent who works full-time and a parent who works part-time. Among low-income adolescent children of married parents at least one of whom works, the parents work, on average, a combined 59 hours per week (see

appendix table A4a). Interestingly, the pattern of parent work for low-income adolescents with married parents is very similar to the pattern for low-income school-age children with married parents.

How Are Low-Income Adolescents Faring?

On average, 23.1 percent of low-income adolescents of single parents exhibit few behavioral problems, 33.7 percent are highly engaged in school, and 73.7 percent are involved in activities. More than 31 percent of adolescents of married parents are identified as having few behavioral problems, 35.6 percent are engaged in school, and 74.4 percent are involved in some extracurricular activity. As was the case among low-income, school-age children, across all outcomes, the average likelihood that low-income adolescents of married parents have a positive outcome is higher than that for low-income adolescents of single parents.

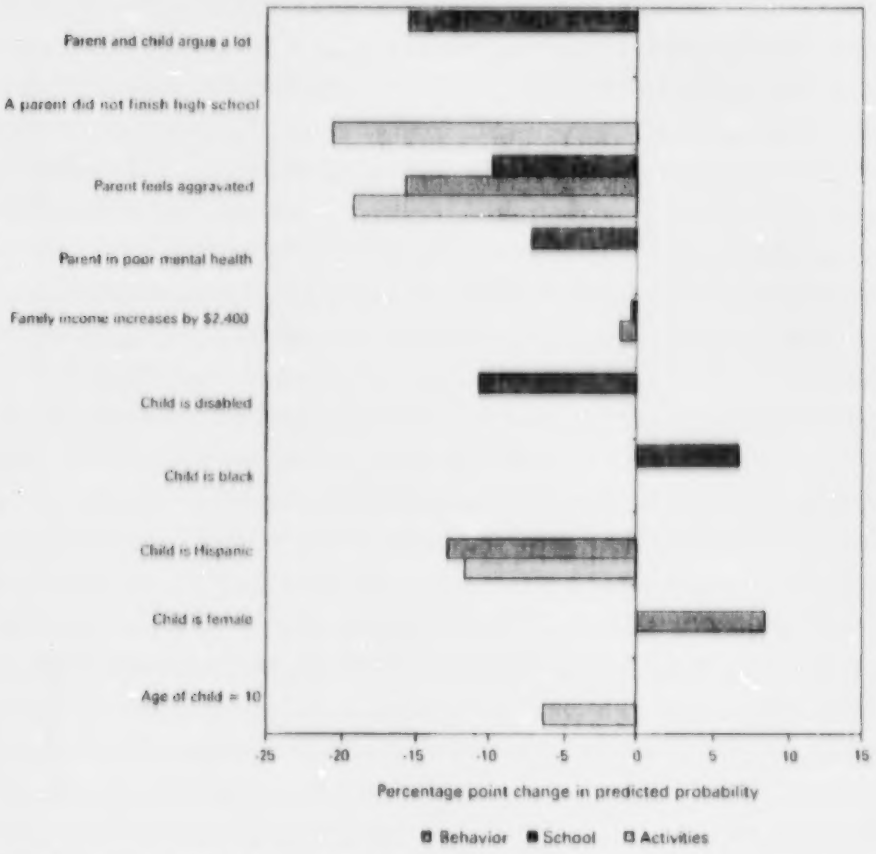
Relationships between Parent Work and Adolescent Well-Being

Levels of Parent Work. The predicted probabilities in table 3 suggest that no strong relationships exist between levels of parent work and child well-being among low-income adolescents of working parents, even when other intervening factors are taken into consideration.[22] Low-income adolescents with a single parent who works full-time are more likely to have few behavioral problems and be highly engaged in school (18.0 percent and 31.8 percent compared with 16.6 percent and 29.1 percent). However, the differences are not statistically significant. Although the results for low-income adolescents of married parents seem to suggest a negative association with levels of parent work and school engagement, none of the differences is statistically significant. In fact, levels of parent work are not statistically associated with any of the outcomes for low-income adolescents of either married or single parents. Once again, family environment and child characteristics have stronger connections with child outcomes than do levels of parent work.

Other Factors. Frequent parent-child arguments, parent aggravation, poor parent mental health, and child disability are all independently associated with a reduced likelihood that a low-income adolescent of a working single parent exhibits few behavioral problems (figure 5). The percentage point reduction for children of single parents who work full-time ranges from 7.1 points (parent in poor mental health) to 15.4 points (parent and child argue a lot). Low-income black adolescents of working single parents are more likely to have few behavioral problems than their white counterparts. Contrary to expectations, income has a small but negative relationship with both few behavioral problems and school engagement, implying that low-income adolescents with relatively less family income have more positive outcomes than low-income adolescents with relatively more family income. The sizes of the associations are quite small, and they are more than offset by the relationships between child well-being and other family and child characteristics.[23]

Having a highly aggravated parent is associated not only with a reduced likelihood of having few behavioral problems but also with a reduced likelihood that a low-income adolescent of a working single parent is engaged in

Figure 5. Change in Predicted Probabilities of Positive Outcomes, Low-Income Children Age 12 to 17 with Single Parents Who Work Full-Time

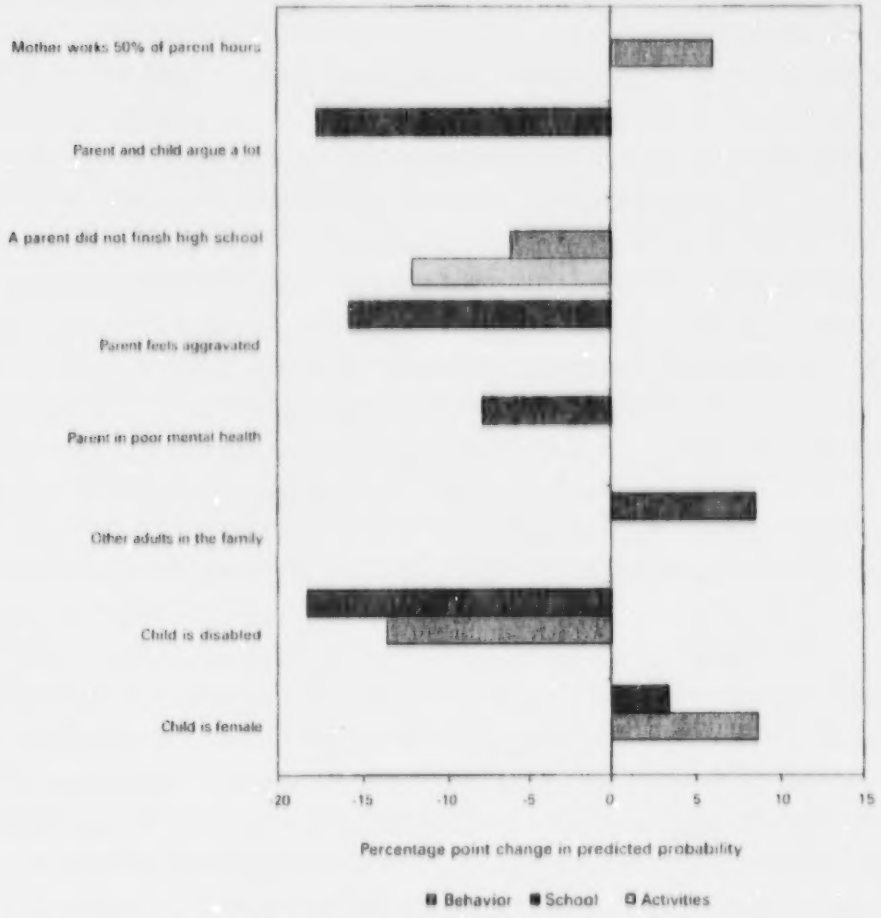


Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.
Note: Results are shown only for statistically significant relationships. See text for a list of all variables included in the analysis.

school or involved in activities. Of course, it is important to mention that all the child outcomes are reported by the parent, and a parent's mental state or feelings about parenting can influence how much the parent knows about his or her teenager. Once again, being Hispanic is associated with reduced school engagement and activity involvement compared with white adolescents. Lower parent education is also linked to a lower probability of activity involvement, as is age. Adolescent girls are more likely to be highly involved in school than adolescent boys.

In contrast to the relationship among school-age children, having a mother who works at least half of all of the parent hours of work is positively associated with school engagement among low-income adolescents of married parents (figure 6). No other work variables included in the multivariate regressions are strongly associated with any of the outcomes and, once again,

Figure 6. Change in Predicted Probabilities of Positive Outcomes, Low-Income Children Age 12 to 17 with Married Parents Who Work Full-Time



Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.
Note: Results are shown only for statistically significant relationships. See text for a list of all variables included in the analysis.

environmental and personal characteristics have stronger associations with outcomes than parent work schedules. In addition to the relative work effort of the low-income adolescent's mother, being female is associated with high levels of school engagement. Conversely, having a parent who did not finish high school and being disabled are associated with reduced probabilities of being highly engaged in school. Lower levels of parent education are also associated with a reduced likelihood that a low-income adolescent with working parents participates in extracurricular activities.

Indicators of the parent-child relationship are negatively associated with the likelihood that a low-income adolescent has few behavioral problems, as

reported by the parent. Arguing a lot with a parent is associated with a 17.6 percentage point (75 percent) reduction in the probability that a low-income adolescent of married parents has few behavioral problems. Similarly, high parent aggravation is associated with a reduced likelihood of having few behavioral problems. The relationships between having few behavioral problems and both poor parent mental health and child disability are, once again, large and negative. However, as mentioned previously, the negative relationship between child disability and child behavior could indicate a problem with the outcome measure. Having adults in the family other than the married parents is associated with having few behavioral problems. Adolescent girls of low-income married parents are more likely than adolescent boys to have few behavioral problems.

Summary of Results for Low-Income Adolescents

Work levels among single parents of low-income adolescents are higher than the levels among single parents of low-income, school-age children. More than half of the low-income adolescents with single parents have a parent who works full-time. Among low-income adolescents of married parents, however, levels of parent work are similar to the levels among school-age children. Neither levels nor schedules of parent work have strong associations with positive outcomes among low-income adolescents. The one exception is a positive link between the share of parent hours of work worked by the mother and school engagement among low-income adolescents of married parents. Interestingly, this is the inverse of the relationship found among school-age children. The positive association could suggest that low-income adolescents view their mothers' working positively and model that behavior by engaging in school. Alternatively, it might suggest that mothers who have adolescents who are engaged students feel more able to engage in market work than mothers of unengaged students.

As was the case for the younger children, family and child characteristics have stronger relationships with well-being among low-income adolescents than do parent work measures. The relationships often differ by marital status. For example, low parent education has more negative relationships with well-being for low-income adolescents of married parents, while parent aggravation is more strongly associated with negative outcomes for low-income adolescents of single parents.

Summary and Conclusion

In general, among low-income children, family and child characteristics are more strongly associated with positive child well-being than are patterns of parent work. Table 4 summarizes the results. Minus signs (-) indicate a negative association between the child outcome listed in the column heading and the characteristics listed in the row heading. Plus signs (+) indicate a positive relationship. The number of minus or plus signs indicates the statistical strength of the relationship.

Table 4. Summary of Findings

Low-Income Children of Married Parents	Children age 0–5		Children age 6–11			Children age 12–17		
	Reading	Outings	Behavior	School	Activities	Behavior	School	Activities
Parent Work Variables								
Full-time/full-time								
Full-time/part-time					+			
Part time/part-time/no work								
A parent works odd hours					- -			
Percent hours worked by mother					+ +		+ +	
Arranged hours for child care				+		NA	NA	NA
Environment								
Center care			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nanny care			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Relative care			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Family day care			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
MKA and child argue a lot	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	- -		
Mother in poor health	+	- -	- -	+				
Father in poor health								
TANF receipt								
Food stamp receipt								
A parent did not finish high school	- - -	- -					- -	- - -
MKA is aggravated			- - -					
MKA experiences poor mental health			- -	- -		- - -		
Ln (social family income)						-		
Another adult lives in social family		+ +						
Number of other children	- - -	-				+ +		
Child Characteristics								
Disabled			- - -	- - -				
Black						- - -	- - -	
Hispanic								
Female	- - -	- -		+ + +				
Age of child	+				+ + +	+	+ + +	
Low-Income Children of Single Parents								
Parent Work Variables								
Full-time	-	- -						
Parent works odd hours								
Environment			NA	NA	NA			
Center care		+ +	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nanny care			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Relative care		+ + +	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Family day care			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
MKA and child argue a lot	NA	NA				- - -		
Parent in poor health	-							
TANF receipt	+							
Food stamp receipt	- -				- - -			
A parent did not finish high school			- - -	- - -				- - -
MKA is aggravated			- - -					
MKA experiences poor mental health						- -	- - -	- - -
Ln (social family income)			+ +			- - -		
Another adult lives in social family						-	-	
Number of other children	+							
	- - -							
Child Characteristics								
Disabled			- -	- - -				
Black	- -		+ + +					
Hispanic						- - -		
Female	- -			+ + +		+		
Age of child			- - -		+ + +		- -	- -
							+ +	
								- - -

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families.

Notes: Minus(-)/plus(+) signs designate a statistically significant relationship in the multivariate analysis. The number of - / + signs indicates the statistical strength of the relationship as follows: - / + significant at the 10% level; - - / + + significant at the 5% level; - - - / + + + significant at the 1% level.

Ln = natural log.

MKA = most knowledgeable adult.

NA = not applicable.

TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 4 highlights the differences in the patterns of association across age groups and marital status. Many of these differences were discussed in the age-group summary sections; this section highlights a few of the interesting comparisons. For example, full-time work is negatively associated with parent involvement for low-income preschoolers of single parents, but neither parent work levels nor schedules are related to parent involvement among low-income preschoolers of married parents. In contrast, both levels and schedules are linked with some child outcomes for low-income, school-age children of married parents, while parent work is not strongly associated with outcomes for low income, school-age children of single parents.

The association between low levels of parent education and child well-being is typically stronger for low-income children of married parents than for low-income children of single parents. On the other hand, parent aggravation is more strongly associated with outcomes for low-income children of single parents, particularly adolescents. Perhaps an additional parent can serve as a buffer between the aggravated parent and the child.

This paper set out to examine the contemporaneous relationships between parent work and child well-being. Although the paper finds a lot of parent work in low-income families, it does not uncover many associations between levels of parent work and child well-being. In all instances, family environment and child characteristics have stronger links to child well-being than does parent work. For policymakers looking to encourage work among low-income families, the message from these results is fairly positive. However, for policymakers concerned about improving child well-being among low-income working families, the news is less good. Parent and child characteristics are strongly related to child well-being, and many of these factors are not easily influenced by policy. Both research and work/family programs should begin to focus some of their resources on understanding and meeting the special needs of less educated and more unstable working parents.

The finding—or non-finding—of no clear relationship between parent work and child well-being is not too surprising.[24] Parent characteristics, such as levels of education and mental health, influence the well-being of children. These environmental factors may have a more immediate impact on children than levels of parent work, the effects of which may only be measured after the passage of time. Furthermore, job characteristics, such as access to family leave and flexible work schedules, may have more of an effect on parenting and child well-being than levels of work. Future research should examine job type and measures of job quality as possible intervening variables in the relationships between parent work and child well-being. Alternatively, mediating parent characteristics may be more stable than levels of parent work and, as a result, the influence of these characteristics on child well-being may have had a longer time to develop. Cross-sectional data do not allow us to measure the historical timing of changes in either parent work or the family environment. These life histories, however, may be crucial to understanding how current patterns of market work relate to current levels of child well-being. Future research should use longitudinal data to help uncover pathways toward positive child outcomes and to examine how patterns of parent work might influence these pathways.

Appendix Tables

Table A1. Variable Description—Family Environment and Child Characteristics

Variable	Definition	Metric
Family environment		
Center care	Included only for children age 0 to 5. Indicates that the child's primary child care arrangement was in formal center care. This measure includes preschool and Head Start programs.	0/1
Nanny care	Included only for children age 0 to 5. Indicates that the child's primary child care arrangement was nanny care.	0/1
Relative care	Included only for children age 0 to 5. Indicates that the child's primary child care arrangement was with a relative.	0/1
Family day care	Included only for children age 0 to 5. Indicates that the child's primary child care arrangement was family day care.	0/1
Poor parent mental health	Adapted from a five-item scale used in the Medical Outcomes Study. Five questions are asked to assess the mental health of the adult most knowledgeable about the sampled child on four dimensions: anxiety, depression, loss of behavioral or emotional control, and psychological well-being. Responses to the five questions are summed and multiplied by five to create a scale with scores ranging from 25 to 100, with higher scores indicating better mental health. Parents with a score of 67 or lower on the scale are considered to be in poor mental health, and they receive a 1 for this variable.	0/1
Parent aggravation	Adapted from a component of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies. The adult in the household who is most knowledgeable about the child is asked how much time during the past month the adult felt that the child/children were harder to care for than most, did things that really bothered them a lot, felt they were giving up more of their lives to meet their child/children's needs than they ever expected, and felt angry with their child/children. Responses to the four questions are summed for a possible total of 16 points, with higher scores indicating less aggravation. Parents who receive a score less than or equal to 11 are classified as being highly aggravated and they receive a 1 for this variable.	0/1
Parent and child argue a lot	Asked only about children age 12 to 17. A value of 1 on this variable indicates that the adult in the household who is most knowledgeable about the child believes that, over the past year, he or she argued a lot with the child.	0/1
Family income	Natural log of family income.	Natural log
Another adult in the family	Indicates that, in addition to the child's parents, at least one other adult lives in the social family.	0/1
Number of other children in the family	Indicates the number of other children under the age of 18 living in the child's social family.	Whole number
A parent has less than a high school education	At least one of the child's parents who lives in the household neither completed high school nor earned a general equivalency diploma.	0/1
Child characteristics		
Disabled	The child has a health condition that limits usual activity.	0/1
Black	The child's race and ethnicity are black and non-Hispanic.	0/1
Hispanic	The child's ethnicity is Hispanic.	0/1
Female	The child is female.	0/1
Age	Age of the child measured in years	years

Table A2a. Logistic Regression Results and Sample Means

Low-Income Children under Age 6 with Single Parents

		Frequent outings		Frequent readings	
Parameter	Sample mean	Parameter estimate	Standard error of estimate	Parameter estimate	Standard error of estimate
Intercept		-0.872	1.127	1.180	0.952
Parent work variables					
Full-time	0.703	-0.661**	0.329	-0.538 *	0.289
Parent works odd hours	0.306	0.402	0.321	-0.061	0.317
Total parent hours of work	35.886	NA	NA	NA	NA
Environment					
Center care	0.379	1.528**	0.619	0.259	0.604
Nanny care	0.033	0.835	0.706	0.136	0.801
Relative care	0.363	1.633***	0.613	0.205	0.630
Family care	0.133	0.590	0.586	-0.305	0.646
Parent is in poor health	0.158	-0.382	0.612	-0.758 *	0.423
Receives TANF	0.240	0.018	0.400	0.790 *	0.414
Receives food stamps	0.461	-0.231	0.291	-0.796 **	0.322
Parent has less than a high school education	0.162	-0.022	0.550	0.424	0.377
Parent is highly aggravated	0.101	0.023	0.670	-0.177	0.421
Parent is in poor mental health	0.218	-0.030	0.354	-0.387	0.345
Natural log of family income	9.251	-0.104	0.095	-0.049	0.077
Other adults in family	0.203	0.366	0.370	0.495 *	0.287
Number of other children	1.300	-0.118	0.123	-0.353 ***	0.114
Child characteristics					
Disabled	0.046	0.194	0.613	1.096 **	0.454
Black	0.430	-0.135	0.368	-0.320	0.302
Hispanic	0.175	-0.721	0.451	-0.623 **	0.306
Female	0.484	-0.290	0.314	-0.160	0.235
Age	2.849	-0.018	0.095	0.028	0.087
Log-likelihood		-501.31		-646.04	

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 Survey of America's Families.
NA = not applicable.
TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
* significantly different at the .10 level.
** significantly different at the .05 level.
*** significantly different at the .01 level.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table A2b. Logistic Regression Results and Sample Means

Low-Income Children under Age 6 with Married Parents

		Frequent outings		Frequent readings	
Parameter	Sample mean	Parameter estimate	Standard error of estimate	Parameter estimate	Standard error of estimate
Intercept		-0.679	0.886	-0.323	0.592
Parent work variables					
Full-time/full-time	0.139	0.106	0.369	-0.212	0.218
Full-time/part-time	0.132	-0.043	0.306	-0.263	0.280
Part-time/part-time/no work	0.059	0.277	0.293	0.426	0.324
Total parent hours of work	54.622	NA	NA	NA	NA
Parent works odd hours	0.302	0.188	0.218	0.210	0.174
% of hours worked by mother	0.170	0.284	0.336	-0.114	0.288
Parents arranged hours	0.163	-0.022	0.369	0.378	0.235
Environment					
Center care	0.109	-0.283	0.307	0.248	0.265
Nanny care	0.024	-0.006	0.458	-0.808 *	0.456
Relative care	0.259	0.102	0.249	-0.097	0.205
Family care	0.063	-0.121	0.353	-0.402	0.324
Mother is in poor health	0.132	-0.621 **	0.308	0.438 *	0.242
Receives TANF	0.027	-0.920	0.569	0.310	0.547
Receives food stamps	0.172	0.312	0.293	-0.123	0.235
A parent has less than a high school education	0.377	-0.611 **	0.254	-0.439 ***	0.163
Parent is highly aggravated	0.087	-0.162	0.435	-0.357	0.435
Parent is in poor mental health	0.145	-0.332	0.299	-0.240	0.257
Natural log of family income	9.985	-0.007	0.087	0.043	0.054
Other adults in family	0.128	0.722 **	0.275	0.396	0.243
Number of other children	1.805	-0.143 *	0.072	-0.215 ***	0.079
Child characteristics					
Disabled	0.054	-0.424	0.440	0.219	0.377
Black	0.062	-0.263	0.576	-0.445	0.375
Hispanic	0.300	-0.446 **	0.214	-0.830 ***	0.173
Female	0.504	-0.035	0.227	0.141	0.155
Age	2.615	0.010	0.055	0.102 *	0.058
Log-likelihood		-1,126.14		-1,416.34	

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 Survey of America's Families.
NA = not applicable.
TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
* significantly different at the .10 level.
** significantly different at the .05 level.
*** significantly different at the .01 level.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table A3a. Logistic Regression Results and Sample Means

Low-Income Children Age 6 to 11 with Single Parents

		Positive behavior		School engagement		Activity involvement	
Parameter	Sample mean	Parameter estimate	Standard error of estimate	Parameter estimate	Standard error of estimate	Parameter estimate	Standard error of estimate
Intercept		0.664	0.806	-0.138	1.012	-0.045	1.916
Parent work variables							
Full-time	0.707	-0.040	0.286	0.287	0.283	-0.037	0.315
Parent works odd hours	0.243	0.155	0.289	0.032	0.303	0.007	0.290
Total hours of parent work	36.639	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Environment							
Parent is in poor health	0.192	0.188	0.348	-0.025	0.353	-0.534	0.378
Receives TANF	0.127	0.021	0.408	0.464	0.372	0.198	0.439
Receives food stamps	0.392	-0.319	0.405	-0.380	0.347	-0.238	0.329
Parent has less than a high school education	0.202	-0.117	0.292	-0.115	0.310	-1.258***	0.286
Parent is highly aggravated	0.119	-1.281***	0.472	-1.137***	0.373	-0.298	0.350
Parent is in poor mental health	0.228	-1.091***	0.349	-0.218	0.312	-0.046	0.332
Natural log of family income	9.422	0.080	0.074	0.021	0.075	-0.035	0.182
Other adults in family	0.196	0.675**	0.284	0.452	0.348	-0.156	0.423
Number of other children	1.595	-0.046	0.103	-0.104	0.089	-0.097	0.091
Child characteristics							
Disabled	0.129	-1.766**	0.700	-1.491***	0.427	-0.052	0.333
Black	0.428	0.841***	0.288	0.173	0.349	0.112	0.259
Hispanic	0.186	0.040	0.328	-0.302	0.315	-0.105	0.300
Female	0.529	0.256	0.269	0.867***	0.236	-0.186	0.304
Age	8.370	-0.311***	0.074	-0.093	0.071	0.228***	0.076
Log-likelihood		-576.86		-710.29		-696.05	

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 Survey of America's Families.
NA = not applicable.
TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
* significantly different at the .10 level.
** significantly different at the .05 level.
*** significantly different at the .01 level.

Table A3b. Logistic Regression Results and Sample Means

Low-Income Children Age 6 to 11 with Married Parents

Parameter	Sample mean	Positive behavior: Parameter estimate	Positive behavior: Standard error of estimate	School engagement: Parameter estimate	School engagement: Standard error of estimate	Activity involvement: Parameter estimate	Activity involvement: Standard error of estimate
Intercept		-0.316	0.780	0.587	0.889	0.679	0.686
Parent work variables							
Full-time/full-time	0.223	0.245	0.313	-0.370	0.241	0.153	0.349
Full-time/part-time	0.160	0.083	0.325	-0.177	0.268	0.723*	0.364
Part-time/part-time/no work	0.073	-0.020	0.426	-0.299	0.275	-0.208	0.305
Total hours of parent work	58.440	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Parent works odd hours	0.265	0.087	0.220	-0.059	0.217	-0.651***	0.239
% of hours worked by mother	0.244	-0.302	0.337	-0.532**	0.260	0.822**	0.352
Parents arranged hours	0.209	0.069	0.317	0.440*	0.261	-0.285	0.358
Environment							
Mother is in poor health	0.136	-0.653**	0.323	0.401*	0.219	0.092	0.315
Father is in poor health	0.119	0.344	0.226	-0.231	0.221	0.245	0.325
Receives TANF	0.039	-0.089	0.771	-0.153	0.667	-0.639	0.458
Receives food stamps	0.151	0.063	0.396	-0.515*	0.293	0.061	0.283
A parent has less than a high school education	0.404	-0.099	0.237	-0.336	0.210	-1.468***	0.219
Parent is highly aggravated	0.052	-1.244***	0.390	-0.379	0.299	-0.094	0.335
Parent is in poor mental health	0.150	-0.781**	0.306	-0.585**	0.251	-0.295	0.239
Natural log of family income	9.992	0.012	0.063	0.012	0.072	-0.006	0.049
Other adults in family	0.173	-0.280	0.313	0.183	0.286	-0.555	0.367
Number of other children	2.188	0.021	0.085	0.005	0.072	-0.202***	0.069
Child characteristics							
Disabled	0.123	-1.948***	0.391	-0.819***	0.303	-0.128	0.266
Black	0.089	0.057	0.373	-0.289	0.367	0.467	0.361
Hispanic	0.235	-0.215	0.242	-0.146	0.201	-0.117	0.184
Female	0.485	0.303	0.201	0.725***	0.172	0.028	0.234
Age	8.399	-0.032	0.059	-0.093	0.060	0.181***	0.063
Log-likelihood		-1,094.05		-1,191.61		-947.54	

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 Survey of America's Families.
NA = not applicable.
TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
* significantly different at the .10 level.
** significantly different at the .05 level.
*** significantly different at the .01 level.

Table A4a. Logistic Regression Results and Sample Means

Low-Income Children Age 12 to 17 with Single Parents

Parameter	Sample mean	Positive behavior: Parameter estimate	Positive behavior: Standard error of estimate	School engagement: Parameter estimate	School engagement: Standard error of estimate	Activity involvement: Parameter estimate	Activity involvement: Standard error of estimate
Intercept		1.012	1.473	2.249	2.355	6.584 *	3.382
Parent work variables							
Full-time	0.801	0.098	0.333	0.127	0.321	-0.286	0.321
Parent works odd hours	0.183	-0.052	0.372	-0.137	0.300	0.437	0.328
Total hours of parent work	39.411	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Environment							
Parent and child argue a lot	0.163	-2.528***	0.672	-0.243	0.489	-0.338	0.408
Parent is in poor health	0.197	-0.321	0.315	-0.479	0.368	0.222	0.310
Receives TANF	0.135	-0.763	0.464	-0.120	0.422	-0.611	0.551
Receives food stamps	0.316	-0.173	0.377	-0.245	0.362	-0.283	0.371
Parent has less than a high school education	0.199	0.011	0.318	0.210	0.412	-1.195***	0.316
Parent is highly aggravated	0.193	-1.088**	0.491	-1.085***	0.410	-1.114***	0.363
Parent is in poor mental health	0.317	-0.849***	0.279	-0.382	0.342	-0.036	0.340
Natural log of family income	9.576	-0.140*	0.081	-0.327*	0.188	-0.110	0.345
Other adults in family	0.278	-0.094	0.363	0.222	0.346	-0.065	0.290
Number of other children	1.460	0.133	0.135	0.105	0.115	-0.002	0.105
Child characteristics							
Disabled	0.167	-1.197***	0.420	-0.882	0.532	-0.380	0.344
Black	0.363	0.639*	0.352	0.174	0.285	-0.392	0.359
Hispanic	0.199	0.094	0.425	-0.849**	0.343	-0.717**	0.325
Female	0.492	-0.006	0.273	0.732**	0.336	-0.218	0.310
Age	14.415	-0.027	0.075	0.015	0.074	-0.205***	0.071
Log-likelihood		-511.65		-612.19		-520.35	

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 Survey of America's Families.
NA = not applicable.
TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
* significantly different at the .10 level.
** significantly different at the .05 level.
***significantly different at the .01 level.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table A4b. Logistic Regression Results and Sample Means

Low-Income Children Age 12 to 17 with Married Parents

Parameter	Sample mean	Positive behavior: Parameter estimate	Positive behavior: Standard error of estimate	School engagement: Parameter estimate	School engagement: Standard error of estimate	Activity involvement: Parameter estimate	Activity involvement: Standard error of estimate
Intercept		-1.340	1.102	0.728	1.206	2.747**	1.044
Parent work variables							
Full-time/full-time	0.231	-0.152	0.332	-0.374	0.283	0.029	0.303
Full-time/part-time	0.167	0.158	0.343	-0.143	0.347	-0.174	0.383
Part-time/part-time/no work	0.076	-0.408	0.583	0.258	0.500	0.124	0.482
Total hours of parent work	58.713	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Parent works odd hours	0.288	-0.092	0.254	-0.292	0.242	0.342	0.281
% of hours worked by mother	0.170	0.219	0.439	0.913**	0.389	-0.087	0.441
Environment							
Parent and child argue a lot	0.113	-1.802**	0.849	-0.501	0.403	-0.189	0.370
Mother is in poor health	0.209	-0.299	0.311	0.161	0.279	-0.092	0.354
Father is in poor health	0.179	-0.304	0.365	-0.347	0.350	0.092	0.340
Receives TANF	0.020	-0.191	0.681	-0.454	0.586	-0.745	1.014
Receives food stamps	0.145	-0.089	0.382	0.547	0.353	0.193	0.366
A parent has less than a high school education	0.455	-0.207	0.292	-0.642**	0.316	-1.102***	0.280
Parent is highly aggravated	0.105	-1.445***	0.465	-0.625	0.386	0.198	0.346
Parent is in poor mental health	0.188	-0.607*	0.355	-0.166	0.265	-0.524	0.333
Natural log of family income	10.035	0.033	0.076	0.001	0.053	-0.031	0.069
Other adults in family	0.292	0.607**	0.282	-0.156	0.277	-0.476	0.303
Number of other children	1.977	-0.013	0.101	-0.059	0.072	-0.142	0.090
Child characteristics							
Disabled	0.124	-1.960***	0.597	-1.086***	0.349	-0.508	0.340
Black	0.111	0.231	0.465	-0.440	0.332	-0.519	0.434
Hispanic	0.273	0.401	0.285	0.135	0.340	-0.311	0.296
Female	0.462	0.338*	0.192	0.787***	0.210	-0.095	0.232
Age	14.481	0.032	0.083	-0.083	0.071	-0.001	0.081
Log-likelihood		-707.93		-782.97		-674.16	

Source: Urban Institute calculations from the 1999 Survey of America's Families.
NA = not applicable.
TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
* significantly different at the .10 level.
** significantly different at the .05 level.
*** significantly different at the .01 level.

Notes

1. Additional information about the NSAF is available on its web site (http://newfederalism.urban.org).

2. "Family" is defined more broadly in this analysis than in analyses that use Census Bureau data. In addition to persons who are related to the sampled child by blood, adoption, or marriage, the child's family includes (1) the most knowledgeable adult (MKA) about the child in the household (usually but not always a parent); (2) any relative of the MKA if the MKA is not related to the child; (3) any unmarried partners of any of the child's relatives and of the MKA; and (4) anyone related by blood, marriage, or adoption to these partners.

3. Fewer than 6 percent of all children live with cohabiting parents (Acs and Nelson 2001), and it is unclear whether these families function more like married-parent or single-parent families. In fact, teenagers who live with cohabiting parents often fare worse than teenagers who live with either a single parent or with both biological parents (Nelson, Clark, and Acs 2001). Including children who live with cohabiting parents in either sample could lead to significant selection bias.

4. It is very plausible that the outcomes for children of ever-married single parents will differ from those of never-married single parents. Including an indicator for ever-married in the multivariate analysis does not change the results, and the coefficient on the variable is never significant. (Sensitivity analysis results are available from the author.)

5. Using stricter definitions of part-time work (e.g., the parent works between 8 and 35 hours per week) does not change the results.

6. For detailed information about the child outcome measures, see Ehrle and Moore (1999). The NSAF uses abbreviated scales and indices from existing surveys to measure child well-being during a telephone interview. Using telephone-based surveys to measure child well-being can help researchers monitor children on a large, national scale. The NSAF, however, is one of the first surveys to use this method for measuring child well-being, so the measures may evolve over time. The results in this paper should be viewed as a preliminary examination of the associations between parent work and child well-being as measured in a telephone survey.

7. The NSAF scale is tailored for two age groups (age 6 to 11 and age 12 to 17) to accommodate developmental differences. To be identified as having few behavioral problems, a child's scale value would have to equal the maximum score of 18, indicating that the respondent answered "never true" to all six scale items.

8. Four questions are asked of the MKA about the child to assess the child's interest in and willingness to do school work. A score equal to or greater than 15 out of a possible 16 points suggests high engagement in school. To receive a score of 15, the MKA had to respond that the child is in the most engaged category on at least three of the four items.

9. An example from the data helps clarify this point. Among school-age, low-income children with single parents, 25 percent have few behavioral problems and 11 percent have many behavioral problems; 37 percent are highly engaged in school and 23 percent are not engaged in school; and 66 percent are involved in extracurricular activities and 34 percent are not.

10. When the same models are run to predict negative outcomes, the results remain qualitatively the same. Results from these regressions are available from the author upon request.

11. Given the cross-sectional nature of the data and the complexity of the relationships between parent work and child outcomes, this analysis examines multivariate associations rather than developing a behavioral model.

12. In an alternative set of specifications, parent work effort was included as a continuous variable equal to the sum of the usual hours of work for the child's parent(s). The pattern of results from this set of specifications was essentially the same as the pattern arising from the specifications that contain the categorical parent work variables.

13. With the exception of the categorical parent work variables, I present predicted probabilities for different levels of included independent variables only if the coefficient for the variable is statistically significant. However, I include all the variables and their coefficients when calculating the predicted probabilities. The coefficients, standard errors, and sample means are in appendix tables A2, A3, and A4, respectively.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

14. The formula for transforming the sum of the products into a probability is as follows: $p(y = 1) = \frac{e^{\beta X}}{(1 + e^{\beta X})}$, where βX equals the sum of the products of the coefficients and the variable values.

15. The distributions of parent work levels and child outcomes come from Urban Institute calculations of the 1999 NSAF. Tables of the results are available upon request from the author.

16. See the discussion in the Methodology section for more details about the regression models. The regression results are run only on the sample of children who have at least one parent who works at least part-time—children of nonworking parents are excluded from the multivariate sample. The full set of regression results is in appendix table A2.

17. Researchers often display standardized changes in predicted probabilities. To standardize the change, the raw difference is divided by the standard deviation of the sample mean of the outcome, for example, frequent reading. I did not make this adjustment in this paper because the standard deviations for all the outcomes are quite similar. Thus, the standardized results are not very different from the unstandardized results, and they are more complicated to discuss.

18. The distributions of parent work levels and child outcomes come from Urban Institute calculations of the 1999 NSAF. Tables of the results are available upon request from the author.

19. The regression results are run only on the sample of children who have at least one parent who works at least part-time—children of nonworking parents are excluded from the multivariate sample. The full set of regression results is in appendix table A3.

20. The size of the effect of child disability on the likelihood of having few behavioral problems—a 75 percent reduction in the probability of a positive outcome—is unusually large. The behavioral problems scale may not be appropriate for children with disabilities.

21. The distributions of parent work levels and child outcomes come from Urban Institute calculations of the 1999 NSAF. Tables of the results are available upon request from the author.

22. The regression results are only run on the sample of children who have at least one parent who works at least part-time—children of nonworking parents are excluded from the multivariate sample. The full set of regression results is in appendix table A4.

23. While the income relationship is counterintuitive, it is quite robust. The restriction of the sample to only low-income children of working parents may be partially driving the result.

24. It is important to reiterate that the NSAF collects data through telephone interviews. It is one of the first surveys to measure child well-being over the telephone as part of a larger data collection effort. Furthermore, the NSAF uses modified versions of scales and indices that are used in other surveys. An early analysis of the measures concludes that they work fairly well (Ehrle and Moore 1999). However, researchers will continue to assess the validity and reliability of the measures.

References

Acs, Gregory, and Sandi Nelson. 2001. " 'Honey, I'm Home.' Changes in Living Arrangements in the Late 1990s." Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute. *Assessing the New Federalism* Policy Brief B-38.

Belsky, Jay. 1990. "Parental and Nonparental Care and Children's Socioemotional Development: A Decade in Review." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52: 885–903.

Belsky, Jay, and David Eggebeen. 1991. "Early and Extensive Maternal Employment and Young Children's Socioemotional Development: Children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53: 1083–1110.

Ehrle, Jennifer, and Kristen Anderson Moore. 1999. *1997 NSAF Benchmarking Measures of Child and Family Well-Being*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute. *Assessing the New Federalism* NSAF Methodology Report No. 6.

Hamilton, Gayle, Stephen Freedman, and Sharon M. McGroder. 2000. *Do Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs Affect the Well-Being of Children? A Synthesis of Child Research Conducted as Part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation; and U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary and Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

Han, Wen-Jui, Jane Waldfogel, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. 2001. "The Effects of Early Maternal Employment on Later Cognitive and Behavioral Outcomes." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 63: 336–54.

Harvey, Elizabeth. 1999. "Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Early Parental Employment on Children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth." *Developmental Psychology* 35(2): 445–59.

Hoffman, Lois W. 1989. "Effects of Maternal Employment in the Two-Parent Family." *American Psychologist* 44: 283–92.

Kalil, Ariel, Rachel E. Dunifon, and Sandra K. Danziger. 2001. "Does Maternal Employment Mandated by Welfare-Reform Affect Parenting Behavior?" Paper presented at the 23rd annual research conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington, D.C., November 1–3.

Morris, Pamela A., Aletha C. Huston, Greg J. Duncan, Danielle A. Crosby, and Johannes M. Bos. 2001. *How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Children: A Synthesis of Research*. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

Nelson, Sandi, Rebecca L. Clark, and Gregory Acs. 2001. "Beyond the Two-Parent Family: How Teenagers Fare in Cohabiting Couple and Blended Families." Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute. *Assessing the New Federalism* Policy Brief B-31.

Parcel, Toby L., and Elizabeth G. Menaghan. 1994. "Early Parental Work, Family Social Capital, and Early Childhood Outcomes." *American Journal of Sociology* 99(4): 972–1009.

Perry-Jenkins, Maureen, Rena L. Repetti, and Ann C. Crouter. 2000. "Work and Family in the 1990s." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62(4): 981–98.

Sherman, Arloc. 2001. *How Children Fare in Welfare Experiments Appears to Hinge on Income.* Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund.

Vandell, Deborah, and Janaki Ramanan. 1992. "Effects of Early and Recent Maternal Employment on Children from Low-Income Families." *Child Development* 63: 938–49.

Wells, Gordon. 1985. "Preschool Literacy-Related Activities and Success in School." In *Literacy, Language and Learning,* edited by David Olson, Nancy Torrance, and Angela Hildyard (229–55). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

About the Author

Katherin Ross Phillips is a research associate in the Urban Institute's Income and Benefits Policy Center. Her research focuses on low-income workers with children. She is currently studying the relationships between parental work and child well-being and the effects of family policy on parental work effort.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").